

Minutes of the Regulatory Coordination Committee
November 8, 1999

No Quorum was present, so no votes were taken. Members present were Michael Miller, George Avery, Susan Smith, and Eddie Clemons. Discussion did proceed on agenda items.

The committee is currently without contractor support, so George Avery volunteered to take the minutes.

Unresolved Issues

Infrastructure needs

Fields of testing are being worked on by the Program Policy and Structure (Chapter 1) Committee and the States Committee using the P/M/A design. Carl Kircher has a compilation of state scope that should be ready by NELAC Vi. SDWA and CWA are posing no major problems. The others are.

The committee is considering proposing that the Chapter 1 committee revise the scope of accreditation to Program/Matrix/Technology to simplify the scope question. Susan Smith reports that Germany accredits for the DIN methods, not the analytes, and allows variations and new analytes if validated. This is consistent with the committee suggestion. The draft language circulated to the committee by George Avery will be considered for recommendation to the Chapter 1 committee at NELAC Vi.

Auditor training A one-time class is under consideration for January for the first 11 states. The On-Site committee is finishing the outlines for the permanent training requirements.

Proficiency Testing NIST has released the first 9 approved PT Providers, with more expected in December. These only include the CW/SW programs. A2LA is establishing a comprehensive program which will include those areas plus other programs. This will result in a fall-back should the NIST program not work or lose funding.

Laboratory Education and Outreach. More is needed in this area. NELAC needs to differentiate between the talks and writings of private volunteers and "official" materials.

National Database This is a potentially serious problem. The structure is apparently not yet resolved, much less larger issues such as programming or interfacing to state systems.

State Infrastructure Concerns were voiced over the capacity of states to implement the program, particularly in the area of staffing.

Internal Consistency

Theoretically the board handles this in the event of conflicts. The committee feels that a standing body with no other chapter responsibilities needs to systematically review changes and have the authority to propose amendments to reconcile differences. This should be either this committee or a new standing committee. George Avery was assigned to draft a memo to the Chapter 1 committee for Michael Miller on this topic.

Regulatory Agenda

This topic was deferred due to the Absence of Carl Kircher. A link on the NELAC web site to the regulatory agenda would be appropriate.

Interstate Compact

This has been referred to Jeanne Mourrain, who has referred it to EPA General Counsel. George Avery will follow up on this with Jeanne.

"One-Stop Shopping" for Accreditation

The feeling of the committee is that it is unlikely that this will ever be obtained in a real-world situation, and NELAC/NELAP should not imply that it will occur. The consensus of the members present is that NELAC/NELAP outreach documents should emphasize minimizing accreditation contracts, not winnowing them down to a single contact.

Future Plans

Distribution of State Regulations

Michael Miller is working on this issue

EPA Agency Wide QC System

The consensus is that this will probably apply to NELAP, and the documents are to be forwarded to the Quality Systems committee in order to ensure that the Quality Manual requirements of their chapter are consistent with this document.

New SDWA rule

The Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule begins to take a revolutionary step in environmental microbiology. The Committee advises the Quality Systems committee to begin considering how the introduction of viral culture and molecular biology techniques will impact the microbiology section of that standard, and refers that committee to the NCCLS standards that have been developed for these techniques in a clinical context.

Tribal Involvement

The meeting closed with some free-form discussion of this issue. Concern was raised over the lack of a contributor vote. Concern was also raised over the potentially disproportionate number of votes proposed for tribes.